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Bureau of Land Management

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

July 1995

Vale District Planning Update

Jordan Resource Area

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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Planning Update

Introduction

The Vale District Planning Update is designed to provide the public with resource management information and to assist the public in understanding land management proposals and decisions.

This update identifies work accomplishments for fiscal year 1994 (Oct. 1, 1993 through Sept. 30, 1994) and achievements projected for fiscal year (FY) 1995.

What to Expect in This Document

The Jordan Resource Area MFP Planning Update is an annual publication. While its format may change, major sections like those described below will be included in each edition.

Feature Article: These reports highlight topics of concern or high public interest within the Jordan Resource Area. Articles feature leading accomplishments or upcoming events. This update issue addresses California bighorn desert sheep which were reintroduced in the Jordan Resource Area over 10 years ago.

Summary of Work: Program summaries identify accomplishments for each major resource program during fiscal year 1994.

Program Initiatives: This section describes notable projects in major resource programs for the upcoming 1995 fiscal year.

Environmental Assessment (EA) Register: The register provides public notification of upcoming proposed actions and an opportunity to facilitate public comment. Environmental assessments on the register may be completed in fiscal year 1995 or later.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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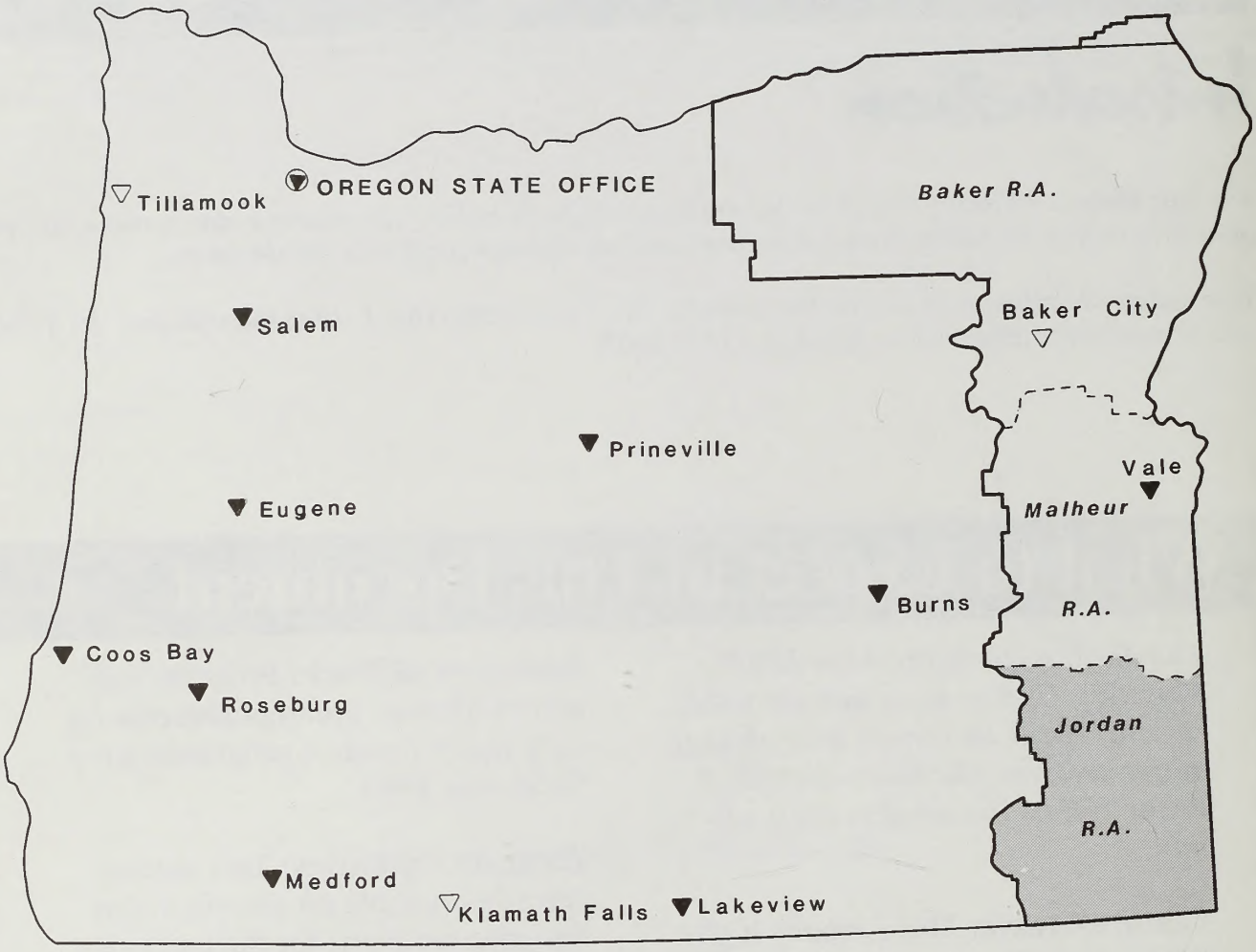
VALE DISTRICT

GENERAL LOCATION MAP



BLM State Office

BLM District Office

BLM Area Office

District Boundary

Resource Area Boundary

SPECIAL PLANNING NOTICE

Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan

BLM Vale and Burns Districts are beginning the preliminary steps for developing a new land use management plan. The document, Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (SEORMP), is required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Land use planning establishes management goals and objectives for resource uses, sets priorities for resource management, and determines resource allocations on public lands. SEORMP encompasses Vale District, Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas including approximately 4.5 million acres in Malheur County; and Burns District, Andrews Resource Area covering about 1.7 million acres in Harney County.

A primary step in the planning process is to seek public input for identifying planning issues. The issues provide the central focus of the plan. During this fall, BLM will publish a brochure and hold public meetings to obtain planning issues.

Eastside Ecosystem Management Plan

In 1994 BLM joined with the U.S. Forest Service (and other agencies) to develop a new management strategy for lands in the Pacific Northwest, as directed by President Clinton. This ecosystem based management strategy includes BLM and Forest Service lands located in the interior Columbia River Basin of eastern Oregon and eastern Washington; and parts of Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Wyoming. The effort includes a Scientific Assessment of the ecosystem process and functions within the planning area, and an evaluation of different alternatives for management direction. Decisions made from this effort provide guidelines for developing management actions. The guidelines will be used in the SEORMP process, as well as, amending existing resource management plans.

FEATURE ARTICLE

CALIFORNIA BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT

Sheep Return to Jordan Resource Area

Big horn sheep.

Historical records indicate that wild sheep were eliminated from eastern Oregon during the early 1900s. Today, however, the impressive bighorn sheep roam the Owyhee River corridor, the Oregon Canyon, and the Trout Creek Mountains. Their return to these areas is credited to a re-establishment program started in 1983 by the Jordan Resource Area in a joint effort with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The program involved new releases and supplemental stocking within established herds.

The current sheep population within Malheur County is comprised of California bighorns with the scientific name of *Ovis canadensis californiana*. California bighorns are one of five recognized wild sheep varieties currently inhabiting North America. Their closest relatives in the western United States are the desert bighorn found in the Pacific Southwest, and the rocky mountain bighorn typical of the Pacific Northwest. California bighorns are intermediate in size between the smaller desert bighorn and the more massive rocky mountain variety.

Proactive management to restore wild sheep to their former range began in the Vale District in 1965 when ODFW delivered 17 head into Leslie Gulch from a population in British Columbia. As of fall 1994, a total of 13 separate releases have been made in Malheur County (eight in the Jordan Resource Area) involving 200 animals.

In 1993, ODFW estimated that nearly 1,000 sheep were resident in Malheur County, and roughly half were in Jordan Resource Area. ODFW estimates the total population could almost be doubled to around 2,000 head given the available habitat resources on public lands of Malheur County.

Big horn sheep.

BLM Plans Provide for Bighorn Sheep

The Vale District's existing Management Framework Plan (MFP) allows for re-establishment of bighorn sheep on public lands in the Jordan Resource Area. The March 14, 1983 Preferred Land Use Alternative for the Jordan Resource Area (which tiers to the district MFP) states that: "*Under the preferred alternative, introduction of California bighorn sheep would be permitted in areas determined to have suitable habitat, such as the Upper Owyhee River Canyon.*" The MFP supports bighorn sheep needs in terms of forage allocations, water development, and habitat security.

As principal land manager of public land in eastern Oregon, BLM has the federal cooperator role with the State of Oregon to facilitate wild sheep releases. This cooperative relationship has been pursued contingent on review of each individual release action and the sum of proposed actions within the scope of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA compliance specifically factors in public comment and multiple use considerations.

Current Planning Efforts

The BLM and ODFW are revising the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for California bighorns in the Jordan Resource Area. The revision will address the rest of the bighorns' range within the Vale District. The HMP's full scope includes:

* Supplemental releases into existing subpopulations to increase total numbers of animals, as well as their genetic diversity.

* New releases in areas historically occupied by sheep to restore sheep to areas they once inhabited.

* "Filling of gaps" for some herds, especially in the Owyhee River system.

* Captures of sheep from public land, in the county, for management purposes, such as release of captured sheep in other Oregon counties or other states.

The revised HMP will tier to a statewide ODFW plan titled "Oregon's Bighorn Sheep Management Plan 1992-1997." The statewide plan details places and priority areas for restocking wild sheep. This HMP also tiers to a national plan developed cooperatively with the BLM and fish and game departments throughout the West.

These plans may sound like too much paper work, but present day public land use policy is complex, requiring broad consultation and specific documentation on actions being considered. To make well-informed decisions, BLM managers need to be aware of actions beyond local levels.

Special Status Species Considerations

California bighorn sheep are currently Category 2 candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Their restoration on public lands through cooperation with state and private organizations is consistent with BLM policy on Special Status Species Management.

The BLM policy is to take proactive steps to prevent the need for candidate plant or animal species to be listed as threatened or endangered under federal law. Together, past release actions and proposed new actions will help meet that policy commitment, and mimimize the risk of Bighorns being listed.

Bighorn sheep are a part of eastern Oregon's natural heritage. Their presence indicates a healthy and diverse wildlife community that can be enjoyed by those who choose to hunt, as well as those who would rather bag their game with a nice camera snapshot. BLM will continue, through cooperation with the State of Oregon, to satisfy desires of both consumptive and nonconsumptive users.

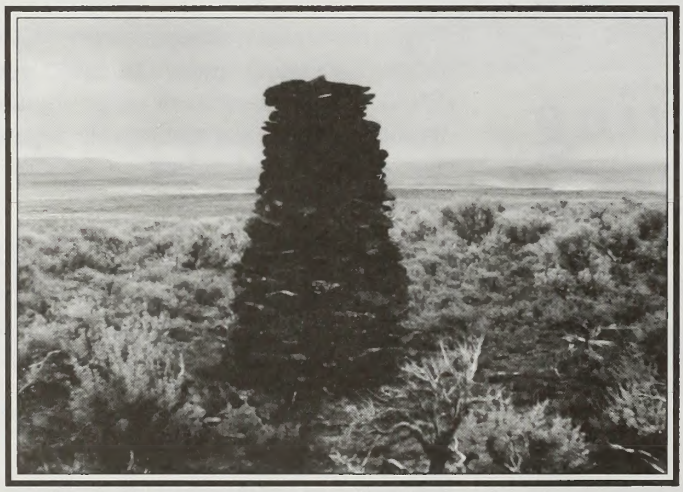
Summary of Work

Reference the Preferred Land Use Alternative document (March 14, 1983) for Northern and Southern Malheur Resource Areas for land use planning decisions for Jordan Resource Area. That document also identifies supplemental land use decisions for livestock and wilderness programs as contained, respectively, in the Rangeland Program Summary and Wilderness Environmental Impacts Statements (EISs). Other land use planning documents for the Jordan Resource Area include: Southern Malheur Rangeland Program Summary (January 1984), Southern Malheur Grazing Management Program Draft EIS (1983), Final Southern Malheur Grazing Management EIS (September 1983), and the Oregon Wilderness EIS (December 1989).

1994 Program Summary

Cultural Resources

The top priority for the Cultural Resource Program was the historic Birch Creek Ranch, acquired as part of a BLM land purchase in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Corridor. Its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, approved by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, was sent to Washington, DC for final approval.



Sheepherder monument—an excellent landmark in the sometimes constant Owyhee Desert landscape.

We have begun work on the Birch Creek Ranch Management Plan. The BLM has strongly encouraged the public to make suggestions for the ranch's beneficial use. We continue to solicit public participation through mailings, news releases, feature articles in the area newspapers, public tours, handouts, and speaking engagements.

Consultation and coordination with Native Americans has become an important part of the Cultural Resource Program.

No work was done on our "Trails West: Americans on the Move" portable exhibit, which will display artifacts found along an important regional trail. Interpretative and educational narratives will accompany the exhibit. This cultural heritage initiative was not funded during 1994.

The Cultural Resource outreach program has expanded its outreach with guidance and assistance from the Public Affairs Officer. In addition to the Birch Creek Ranch efforts, we worked with grade school children; spoke to local organizations; had many articles published in the local newspapers; and distributed bookmarks, posters, and book bags to area libraries.

In support of other programs, the Cultural Resource Program completed 43 actions, inventorying a total of 520 acres and recording 19 new archeological sites. Five trespasses were inventoried. No sites were adversely affected by the trespasses or by BLM construction and management activities.

Range Management

Emphasis in the Range Program during the 1994 grazing season focused, as in the previous year, on use supervision and monitoring.

Crested wheatgrass seeding provides forage for cattle.

Due to below normal precipitation levels, drought management increased on all allotments.

The lower precipitation levels caused concern particularly for the vigor of key rangeland plants and the availability of adequate livestock water. Considerable time was spent ensuring livestock grazing complied with district guidelines in support of the Preferred Use Alternative. The guidelines direct allocating forage to achieve management objectives that provide sustained yield over time while protecting soils, forage plants, and watershed values.

Of the 31 allotments monitored for utilization and actual use, 8 were placed in the Improve (I) Category, 22 in the Maintain (M) Cateory, and 1 was listed in the Custodial (C) Category. Trend and climate monitoring was done on two I allotments, one M allotment, and one C allotment in preparation for allotment evaluations during late winter-to-early spring of 1995.

During 1994, the Wroten (11003) Allotment evaluation was initiated and finalized (see Appendix A). Coordination efforts are progressing on the Bighorn, 15-Mile Community, Sherburn, Jackies Butte, Echave, Albisu-Alcorta, Saddle Butte, McCormick, Eiguren, and Arock allotment evaluations.

Range improvement projects completed in 1994 are listed in Appendix A. Two reservoirs were reconstructed in 1994 due to washouts by high runoff the previous year.

Riparian management was again emphasized in the Jordan Resource Area, with the Trout Creek riparian improvement effort continuing to be a major workload. A biological assessment was completed for the McCormick Allotment to assess impacts of the 1994 grazing strategy on Lahontan cutthroat trout. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) responded with a no jeopardy biological opinion for the grazing management on the McCormick Allotment. To comply with the USFWS biological opinion, use supervision of livestock grazing started in April and lasted until mid-September. No grazing problems were encountered with operator compliance in the riparian pastures of the Trout Creek area in 1994.

Among other 1994 Range Program accomplishments were several tours of the Trout Creek/Oregon Canyon mountains. The tours focused on riparian management efforts and issues concerning the Lahontan cutthroat trout. Tour participants included livestock operators, USFWS, environmental groups, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Riparian monitoring indicates management objectives are being met and grazing strategies are being followed.

While no new allotment management plans (AMP) or revisions were completed in 1994, three AMPs are in the negotiation process.

Drought conditions were present again in 1994. While spring rains aided in forage production, the lack of spring runoff led to minimal stock water in several areas. Use supervision was emphasized due to the low amount of available water and the potential for above normal utilization levels. Some livestock permittees moved livestock from pastures earlier and also removed livestock from public lands earlier than normal. Use supervision has increased within the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River corridor to assure the protection and enhancement of the designated outstandingly remarkable values.

Recreation

Patrol and maintenance of recreation sites were accomplished by permanent and temporary staff throughout the year. Sites included in the patrol and maintenance program were: Three Forks, Rome, Birch Creek, Willow Creek Hot Springs, Owyhee Springs, Taylor Grazing Interpretive site, Cow Lakes and Antelope Campgrounds, Anderson Crossing, and

Rapid on Owyhee River between Three Forks and Rome.

some dispersed camp sites. Single-vault toilets were installed at Three Forks and Willow Creek.

Recreation staff increased hunter patrols during October 1993 and August and September 1994, which encompasses antelope and deer seasons and part of the chukar season. Information/fact sheets were distributed to hunters in the field to provide "Leave No-Trace" guidelines.

Recreation inventory was done for the upcoming Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan. A Visual Resource Management inventory was initiated with completion of the ratings for scenic quality units. Wild and Scenic River inventories were also initiated. Scenic quality ratings for potential wild and scenic rivers were completed this year.

The new sign for the Highway 95 Interpretive site was completed, but not installed, at the end of fiscal year 1994.

Drought conditions resulted in below normal water flows which limited the number of floatboat trips during 1994. A total of 25 trips launched from Rome and Three Forks with approvximately 100 visitors. Special Recreation Permits for the Owyhee River were issued to the 23 commercial outfitters who applied for such use. BLM river patrols provided visitor service, river clean-up, regulation compliance and resource monitoring & protection.

Both floatboat and foot patrols were performed for the Main Owyhee, North Fork Owyhee, and West Little Owyhee Rivers. These patrols are a routine part of the Owyhee River system management as a means of gathering data and providing resource protection and visitor service.

The Rome Launch Site on the Owyhee River was upgraded in fiscal year 1994. Improvements included tree planting, native plant seeding, and facility painting. Personnel stationed at Rome during the spring and summer provided visitor service and facility maintenance.

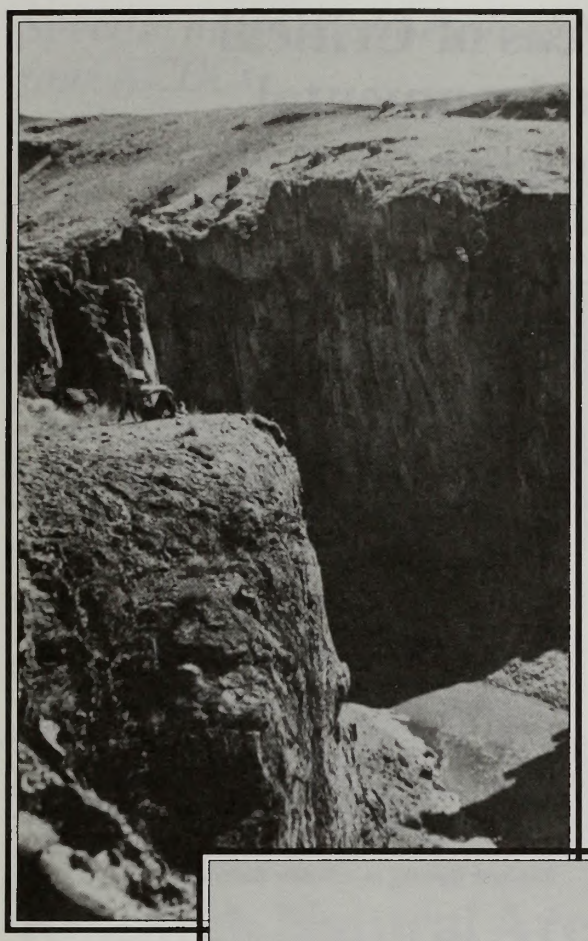
Other river program accomplishments were: updating the Owyhee River Boating Guide to add information about cultural resources and livestock grazing and to revise the river use ethics section; removing approximately 150 tamarisk plants (an aggressively invading non-native species); and improving two small sections of the Birch Creek Ranch Road.

During 1994, BLM began recording the number of vehicles entering the historic Birch Creek Ranch. Estimating three passengers per vehicle, there were 1,113 visitors with the most (192) in October.

Wilderness

Interim management of Jordan Resource Area's 17 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) continued in fiscal year 1994 with ground and aerial patrols. This included patrolling WSAs at least monthly during the field season to inspect for potential human impacts. Patrols are accomplished by driving the boundary roads and interior ways by motor vehicle or mountain bike, cross-country hiking, horseback riding, floating the river by raft or kayak, and overflying the areas by helicopter.

Interim management also includes review and analysis of proposals within WSAs to prevent potential impacts to wilderness values and to assist with enhancement of wilderness values. During 1994, for example, maintenance was done on one water pipeline within the Owyhee River Canyon WSA. The pipeline is above ground, so no surface disturbance occured.

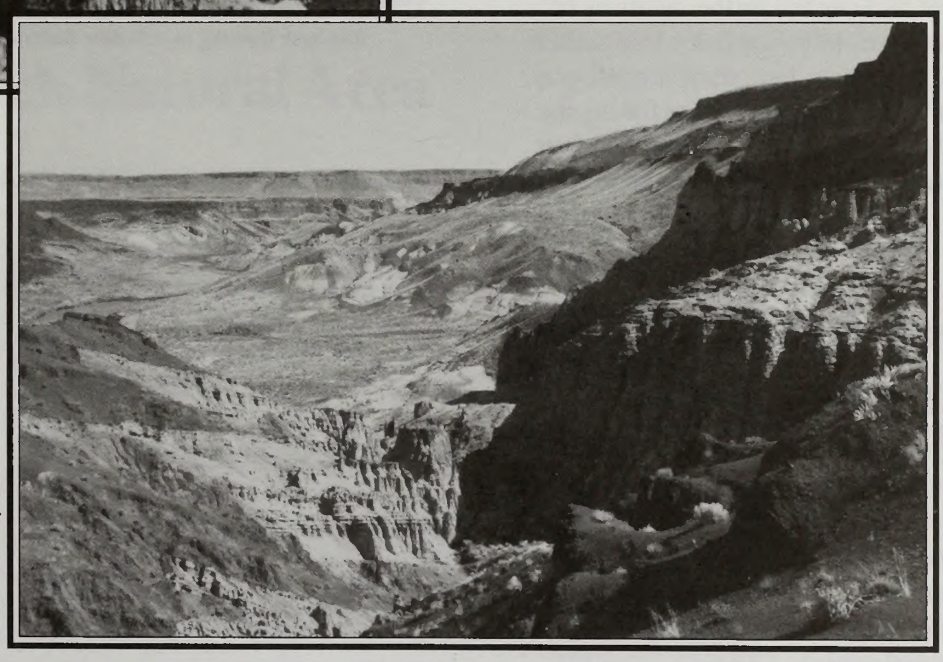


Hiker's rim view of Owyhee Canyon.

Several rehabilitation projects were accomplished during the field season. An old garbage dump within the Saddle Butte WSA was cleaned by removing all garbage. Another project was removal of an old range fence that was no longer functioning and deemed unnecessary. Both projects helped to enhance wilderness values by removing human intrusions.

River staff continued the campsite inventory and monitoring programs within the Owyhee River Canyon, Lower Owyhee River, and Upper West Little Owyhee WSAs. Cultural and wildlife monitoring studies also continued in these areas. Due to their Wild and Scenic River designations, these three WSAs receive increased inventory and monitoring efforts to comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This data collection assists with WSA interim management and provides useful information for potential future wilderness management.

Hunting use continues to create one of the biggest visitor impacts in WSAs. High amounts of concentrated use in primitive sites create some soil compaction, vegetation trampling, litter (including solid human waste), and a small amount of off-road vehicle use. Education efforts have been aimed at controlling and reducing these impacts, especially in the Trout Creek/ Oregon Canyon Mountains WSAs.



Outstanding examples of erosion effects on sedimentary deposits in Chalk Basin.

The Intermountain Wilderness Area Ecosystem Study at Jordan Craters WSA was expected to start in 1994, but was deferred due to a lack of funding. This joint study between the National Biological Survey and BLM is part of the U.S. Global Change Research Program. The study includes monitoring of vegetation, air quality, and hydrology.

Minerals

Two surface management inspections for mining claims were completed and found the claims within

compliance. There were 16 material sales/free use permits issued for gravel, flat rock, and basalt rock for asphalt crush rock. The permittees were various users including private individuals, State of Oregon Highway Department, Malheur County Road District, and Jordan Valley Irrigation District. Several 5-year free use permits received annual monitoring. One mineral material trespass case was resolved by fine assessment and reclamation work. Currently, the resource area has no mineral leasing activity. Inspections were completed on 28 community mineral material site-pits.

Lands and Rights-of-Way

Realty staff processed seven right-of-way applications and renewed nine 302 Agricultural Permits.

Three land exchanges proposed for completion in 1994 were delayed until 1995. One exchange is in escrow, and the other two needed further analysis of cultural resource values.

A new recreation public and purpose lease for McDermitt Landfill was issued for one year, and four quarterly compliance checks of the landfill were made.

Hazardous Materials Management

The Hazardous Materials Program assisted the Realty and Minerals Programs in conducting hazardous material inventories for mine sites and rights-of-way in the Jordan Resource Area. The Hazardous Materials Specialist developed a computerized data base program to compile and analyze this inventory data.

In compliance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, reports were submitted to the State of Oregon Fire Marshall's Office on materials being stored at the Burns Junction Administrative Site and Birch Creek Ranch.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Research lighting in a Saddle Butte lava tube.

The BLM establishes Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to identify and provide customized management for regionally important areas on public lands. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act identifies ACECs as the highest priority project for BLM. There are four ACECs in the Jordan Resource Area: Owyhee River, Jordan Craters, Saddle Butte Lava Tubes, and Whitehorse Basin. Resource area personnel in various programs visited each ACEC to monitor for general resource condition.

Considerable overlap exists between management of each ACEC and other proposed or existing protective legislation including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and Wilderness Study Area policies. While providing a broad protective net around ACEC resources, these acts and policies also allow for uses that do not conflict with the needs of the special resources.

Specific notes about each of the four ACECs:

Owyhee River ACEC: This ACEC is concurrently managed under the Wild and Scenic River Act and the Owyhee River Management Plan which was completed about a year ago. Inventory and monitoring of riparian vegetation, raptors, songbirds, and fish has been initiated to determine the condition and trend of this riverine area.

Jordan Craters ACEC: Land exchanges affecting the Jordan Craters ACEC may result in acquisition of private inholdings for exchange of public lands with high agricultural potential.

Saddle Butte Lava Tubes ACEC: The BLM has initiated a national inventory of caves, including those within the Saddle Butte Lava Tubes ACEC.

Whitehorse Basin ACEC: Watershed management continues to improve the condition of upland and riparian resources in this ACEC.

Research Natural Area

Conditions at the Jordan Craters Research Natural Area remain static. Returning drought conditions stressed the native sagebrush communities. Long-term monitoring of the two kipukas continues to provide a better understanding of the drought effects on native plant communities. These two sites, never affected by human management, provide a basis for comparison of areas under various management strategies.

Coffee Pot Crater and adjacent lava flow is among youngest in North America.

Wildlife

Deer and antelope herds are slowly recovering from the effects of long-term drought and a large winter-kill in 1993. Low winter moisture resulted in less than desired plant growth, and forage conditions are below optimum. California bighorn sheep were reintroduced into unoccupied habitat in Jordan Resource Area in 1994 in accordance with the Habitat Management Plan (see feature story). Reliance on vegetation along canyon rims and steep slopes buffers spared the bighorn sheep from some effects of drought and forage competition.

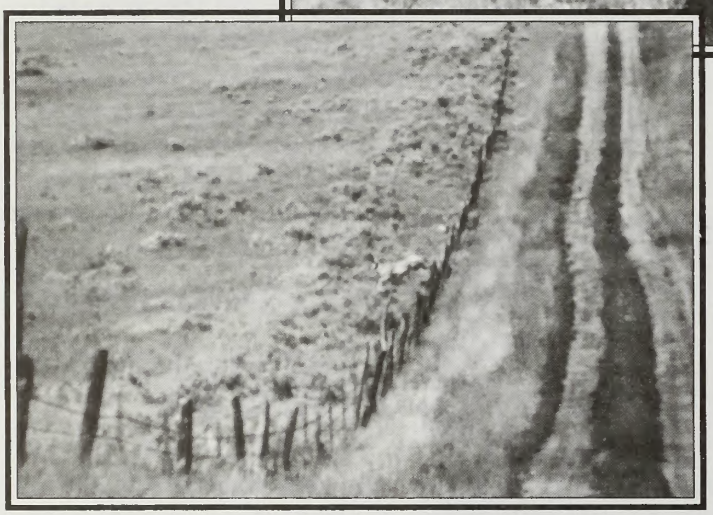
Game bird (chukar, valley quail and sage grouse) populations increased with the mild winter and adequate spring moisture. BLM and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife co-funded a substantial sage grouse lek inventory in the Jordan Resource Area during 1994. This is a challenge cost share project that will be funded for several more years.

Fisheries

The 1994 Fisheries Program focused on riparian and stream habitat monitoring. In the Trout Creek Mountains, long-term riparian studies continued on 12 stream sites. Willows, aspens and grasses generally maintained positive growth trends although early season grazing occurred in some areas. Despite severe drought conditions, Lahontan cutthroat trout were present in all streams that had

Blacktail jackrabbit populations show increase since harsh winter of 1993.

Antelope prefer open grassy areas to avoid predators.



Proof that antelope can jump.

sufficient discharge. Both juvenile and adult trout were evident.

Riparian monitoring was done in the upper West Little Owyhee River along with a preliminary fish survey. Data indicates that four native fish species utilize isolated pools near springs during the summer low flow. The North Fork of the Owyhee River was inventoried to determine native fish species composition and upstream distribution of smallmouth bass, an introduced species. Surveys were completed on 8 stream miles, from the Idaho border to Three Forks. The surveys—which were done by snorkeling representative pools and riffles—counted seven native species, as well as bass. Although bass were found upstream, they were most abundant in large stagnant pools near Three Forks.

Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

Long-term efforts to restore threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout habitat have started to show benefits. Within the BLM this has been an interdisciplinary effort led by the Range and Wildlife Programs with strong support from Recreation, Wilderness, Lands, Watershed, Cultural, and Wild Horse programs. Operations Program personnel completed many on-the-ground projects to implement the decisions. Habitat monitoring by BLM indicates rapid improvement of riparian vegetation in streams occupied by trout.

The Trout Creek Working Group received the BLM Director's Award for Riparian Management during the annual tour of the project area. Among those on hand for the award presentation were representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Cattlemen Association, and Oregon Trout. Participants also included reporters and photographers from several news organizations, who gave national recognition to all cooperators for the success of the Trout Creek Working Group.

Wild Horses

Prolonged drought conditions led to frequent monitoring of water and forage availability within the herd

Packing demonstration using a wild horse.

management areas (HMAs). Lack of water and forage in most HMAs required a reduction in livestock numbers to maintain ecological balance between livestock and the habitat. Available water sources were maintained and operated during the summer months in herd areas.

Wild horse removals planned for late fiscal year 1994 were rescheduled to 1995. Lack of water in the Sheepheads HMA required emergency removal of 190 horses in late August. An emergency removal of 68 horses was also necessary in the Jackies Butte HMA. When water became available, unadoptable horses taken during the removals were returned to the HMAs in compliance with BLM policy.

Soils and Watershed

The Soil and Watershed Program concentrated primarily on riparian habitat management and monitoring in the Oregon Canyon-Trout Creek Mountains, headwaters of the West Little Owyhee River, and the Main Owyhee River. Gathering baseline data represented the majority of work. Collected data will be used to establish resource condition and trend and management actions.

Fire Management

Firefighter backfiring sagebrush adjacent to wildfire.

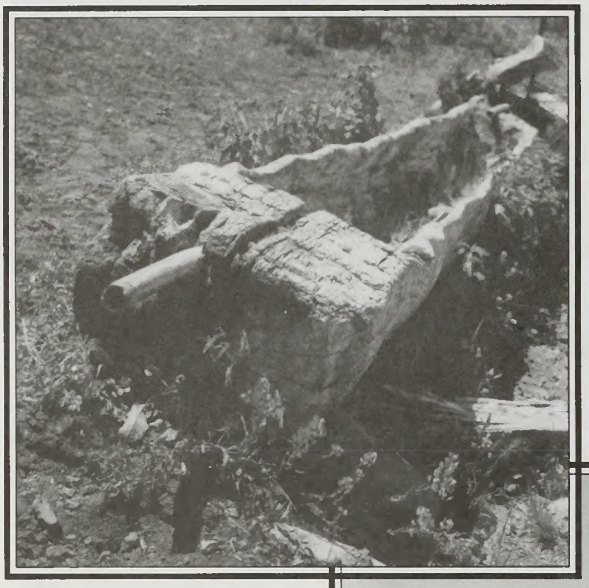
The 1994 fire season began in May and ended in October with the onset of scattered precipitation, shorter days, and much cooler temperatures. In spite of record high temperatures that set the stage for an extreme fire season, there were only three fires in Jordan Resource Area (two human-caused and one lightning-caused). The total acreage burned was 25 acres, including 2 BLM acres and 23 private acres. The number of fires and acreage consumed were both below average.

Up to 15 BLM firefighters assigned to the Jordan Resource Area reside at the Jordan Valley and Burns

Junction Fire Stations. When not fighting fire, the crews help resource specialists with field projects. During 1994, these firefighters worked approximately 475 hours building fence and maintaining cattle guards and recreation sites.

1995 Program Initiatives

Cultural Resources



Log watering troughs were once the Owyhee Desert standard.

Moving cattle is an important part of livestock management.

Priority undertakings during 1995 will depend on funding. We hope to complete an Historic Building Report that will direct historic building repair and maintenance at Birch Creek Ranch. In addition, we hope to begin restoring the Birch Creek waterwheel. In 1989, it was one of three remaining in all of Oregon.

If funding allows, we will complete the "Trail West: Americans on the Move" portable exhibit.

Coordination and consultation with Native Americans will continue to be a Cultural Resource Program priority.

Inventories conducted in support of other programs are expected to be about the same as in 1994.

Range Management

The Range Program will continue to emphasize cooperative management through coordination efforts with other programs and the various public land users. High emphasis will be given to use supervision and monitoring of Improved and Maintained allotments. The Trout Creek area will continue to have a high level of use supervision for riparian pastures. Use supervision and riparian monitoring will be emphasized on the portions of the Owyhee River system designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Three allotments are scheduled for evaluation in 1995: Antelope, Sheepheads, and Louse Canyon Community. The following carryover evaluations from 1994 will be completed in 1995: Bighorn, McCormick, Arock, Eiguren, Saddle Butte, 15-Mile Community, Albisu-Alcorta, Echave, Jackies Butte, and Sherburn. Evaluation meetings will be scheduled between January and March, and evaluation documents are expected to be completed by the summer. If you want more information on any allotment evaluation, contact the area manager.

Allotment planning efforts will be emphasized in 1995. Work will progress on environmental assessments for the 15-Mile Community and McCormick Allotments. Specifically analyzed will be grazing strategies for enhancement of riparian and resource conditions. Negotiations will continue to finalize the Zimmermann Allotment Management Plan (AMP) and revise the West Cow Creek and Antelope AMPs with projected completion in 1995.

Coordination with livestock permittees will be given priority to minimize impacts to other environmental resources, as well as the permittee's operations. Good cooperation and understanding are anticipated from the livestock permittees if conditions warrant adjustments.

Recreation

The Final Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Main, West Little, and North Fork Owyhee National Wild and Scenic Rivers received four appeals, two of which were later combined. The appeals and case file are now with the Interior Board of Land Appeals. None of the appellants requested a stay so implementation is underway. Part of that implementation includes some restrictions and closures within the river corridors, as published in the Federal Register in December of 1994. Other initiated actions include inventory and monitoring of recreation, scenic, cultural, botanical, wildlife, and water resources.

River, Wildlife and Range Programs will continue the Owyhee River riparian inventory with focus on vegetation quantity, quality and potential. Side drainages with perennial water will be photographed for initial baseline data. Range monitoring plots along the river will be established for determining vegetation condition and livestock management practices. Cultural site monitoring and inventory is planned for all three river sections with five sites selected for inventory on the middle section of the Main Owyhee. River rangers will provide recreation site maintenance, visitor service and assistance, search and rescue, and resource protection.

Recreation maintenance duties will be accomplished by seasonal staff during the fiscal year 1995 field season. Higher use sites will continue to be the priority, with other sites receiving routine maintenance. Recreation site patrols and visitor contacts will be accomplished in conjunction with resource protection duties.

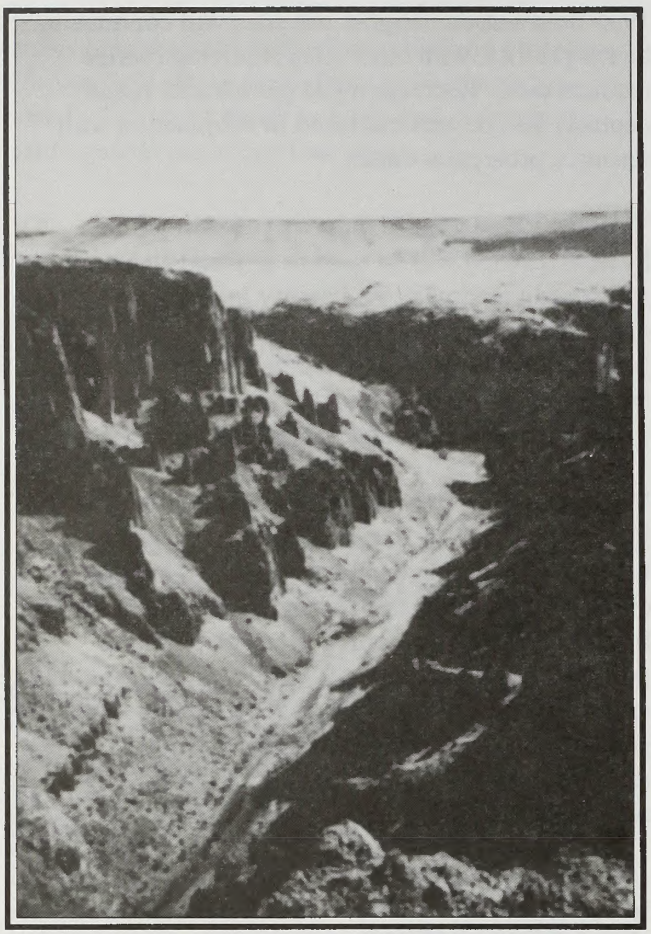
The new Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) will be used as a management tool and coordinated with the Facility Inventory Maintenance Management System (FIMMS). The 1994 fiscal year input was included in RMIS in December, and FY 1995 information will be incorporated throughout the year as data is obtained.

Visual Resource Management Inventory Classes were completed for Jordan Resource Area at the beginning of fiscal year 1995. These inventory classes will be used as a management tool during the Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan process. Wild and Scenic River Inventory work will continue on recreation and scenic resources. In general, recreation staff will be assessing whether a river/stream area has outstandingly remarkable recreation or scenic values.

Wilderness

Interim management of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) will continue to be the main focus in the Wilderness Program. Patrols and surveillance of WSAs will continue, as will signing of WSA boundaries.

Aspen grove in Little Whitehorse Creek drainage.



Wilderness Study Area status provides additional resource protection for the West Little Owyhee River.

There are no rehabilitation projects proposed, but staff will continue looking for potential projects that would protect or enhance wilderness values.

Outreach efforts will continue to be an important focus of the Wilderness Program. A Trout Creek/ Oregon Canyon area brochure is being developed in coordination with the Burns District. Hunter outreach will be improved through increasing cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and increasing information dissemination and signing for WSA visitors.

Monitoring and patrols during October showed that hunter impacts to WSAs were less this year. Unfortunately one aspen has been cut down and the violator was not caught. BLM increased patrols over last year.

Minerals

Applications will be processed for mineral materials associated with: maintenance of Malheur and Harney County roads, Oregon State highways, Jordan Valley Irrigation District, Jordan Valley School District, BLM roads, and requests from private individuals. Other minerals activity will include processing Notices of Intent for mining claims; conducting surface management enforcement inspections; and meeting public demand for flat rock, basalt rock, and sand and gravel products. The minerals staff also plans to inspect and post signs at community mineral material site pits.

Lands and Rights-of-Way

The Eiquren and Oregon Canyon Ranch Land Exchanges totaling 1,360 and 1,263 acres respectively are proposed for completion in 1995. Currently, the exchanges are going through escrow. These exchange provides federal lands for a similar acreage of private lands containing notable wildlife values. Jordan Resource Area is involved with two proposals exchanging private lands within an area under wilderness review for public lands not under wilderness review. Two additional land exchange proposals are also being considered.

Realty staff will continue with rights-of-way processing for utility lines and county roads. Authorization for a one-year lease for the existing McDermitt Landfill will be completed. The McDermitt Landfill is scheduled for closure the fall of 1995 in accordance with a closure plan approved by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Jordan and Malheur Resource Areas are evaluating the feasibility of initiating a facilitator land exchange. In this action, higher valued agricultural trespass parcels would be exchanged for inholding lands in wilderness study areas, the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River corridor, areas of critical environmental concern, and natural research areas. The joint effort would allow BLM to dispose of higher value agricultural trespass lands, helping to offset past and future BLM land acquisitions. Also, the exchange would

contribute towards maintaining a stable county tax base.

Hazardous Materials

As in recent years, mining activities in the Jordan Resource Area will be subject to a high level of coordination between the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and BLM. Area personnel will respond to any illegal or "midnight dumps" and hazardous material incidents. The hazardous material specialist will continue to work with other resource programs to identify potential hazardous materials sites/situations.

The Hazardous Materials Program will provide guidance and assistance to the Realty Program on the closing of McDermitt Landfill.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The four ACECs will be monitored to ensure protection of their significant resources. There will be a review of the Management Framework Plan and each ACEC plan to determine what type of information can be collected prior to initiation of the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan. In addition, streams in the Whitehorse ACEC will be targeted for a cooperative Lahontan cutthroat trout population inventory with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The fish count is planned for fall when water temperatures are low enough to reduce stress to the trout. The last systematic cutthroat count occurred in 1989. Population numbers obtained in fiscal year 1995 will be compared to previous estimates to assess trout population recovery.

Research Natural Area

The focus of management in the Jordan Crater Research Natural Area continues to be monitoring waterfowl and vegetation at Batch Lake, and the Thompson big-eared bat within various lava tubes. Resource information will be compiled to assist in preparation of the upcoming Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan. Information will be collected to begin the process of evaluating the need to retain existing ACEC's or designate additional areas.

Wildlife

The California Bighorn Sheep Habitat Management Plan will be revised since there are sheep available for reintroduction. Needs of wintering big game animals will be reviewed to assess availability of cover and food on public lands. Riparian inventory and monitoring will continue to focus on the Trout Creek Mountains, but areas along the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River will also be included as personnel and time allow.

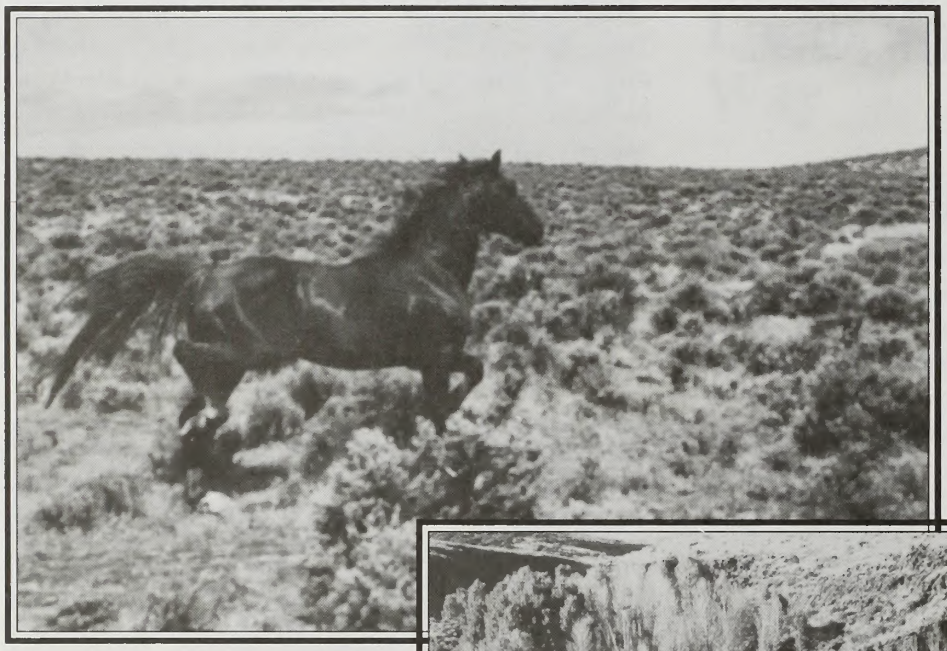
Young bighorn lamb, just a few weeks old.

Wildlife biologists will work closely with other programs to develop interdisciplinary approaches to managing the watershed and mountain ecosystems of highest priority. Long-term management will continue to improve conditions of riparian areas and high elevation wet meadows in the Trout Creek Mountains. This will especially benefit sage grouse, native fish, big game, and song birds. The Wildlife Program will continue to give high priority to the Eastside Ecosystem Environmental Impact Statement. Biologists will also begin data compilation for the upcoming resource management plan.

to monitor their distribution, growth and reproduction. Monitoring of Lahontan cutthroat and redband trout habitats will continue in the Trout Creek Mountains and West Little Owyhee River, respectively. Sage grouse lek inventory, strutting bird counts, and a ferruginous hawk inventory will be priorities for the wildlife biologists. The biologists will also be revising the habitat management plan to address additional bighorn sheep introductions.

Plant and animal inventories will be completed for all proposed development activities that involve ground disturbance.

Young stallions, between two and fours years of age, are forced out of the herd.



Wild Horses

Monitoring of the horse population levels and the habitat of all herd management areas (HMAs) will be emphasized in fiscal year 1995. The data is used to distinguish horse and livestock impacts on the habitat and to determine ecological viable horse population numbers. Coyote Lake HMA will be monitored closely to deter-

Beaver dam on Cottonwood Creek in Trout Creek Mountains.

Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

Sensitive plants and animals will be observed and studied during the coming field season

mine whether population adjustment is necessary to ensure a thriving ecological balance of the area.

There are 27 horses from the Coyote Lake HMA that are outside of the herd management area and in an adjacent allotment. These horses will either be gathered for adoption or moved back into the herd area.

The wild horse specialist plans to identify potential water sources and development for horse use as funding becomes available.

Soils and Watershed

Between 10-15 miles of aerial color photography will be taken along several streams in Jordan Resource Area to provide a visual watershed record for historical purposes. Range monitoring plots will be established within the Owyhee River corridor, and photographs will be taken of perennial flowing side drainages to establish vegetation baseline condition.

Fire Management

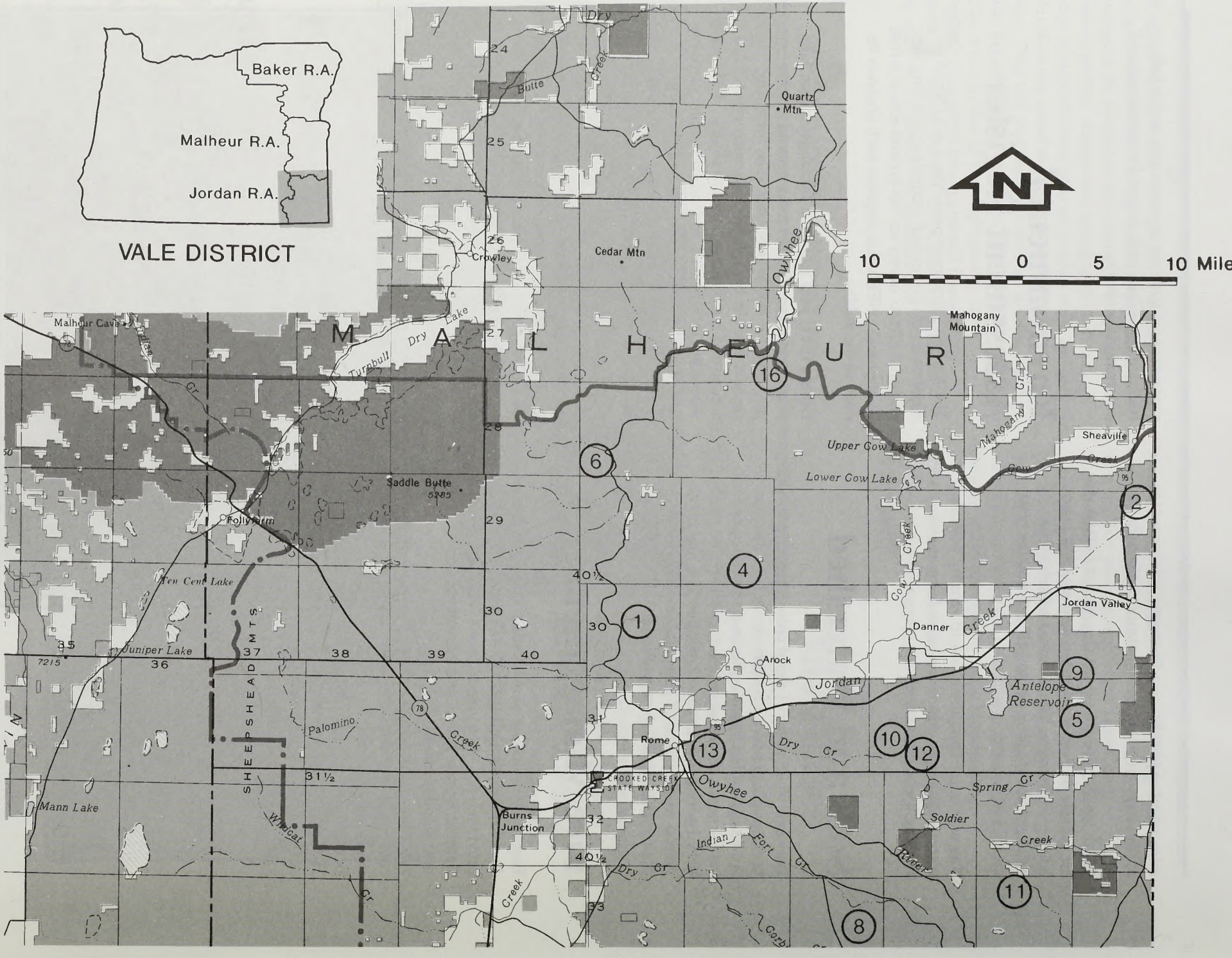
Engine crew staffing at the Jordan Valley and Burns Junction fire stations in 1995 will be the same as the previous year—two engine crews (one heavy and one light) at Jordan Valley, and three engine crews (two heavy and one light) at Burns Junction. Wildfire and human-caused fire suppression within the Jordan Resource Area will be the crews' primary duty. However, depending on the severity of the fire season, the crews may be available for suppression outside the resource area and to help resource specialists with seasonal maintenance and construction projects.

Environmental Assessment Register

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an environmental analysis concerning the potential effects of any on-the-ground action before its approval. NEPA also requires such analyses be open to the public.

During fiscal year 1995, the Jordan Resource Area plans to analyze several on-the-ground actions projected for that year or later. The following register lists the environmental assessments (EAs) anticipated for completion in fiscal year 1995, along with other information, to facilitate public participation in the analysis process. In addition to this register notice, legal notices are published in local newspapers whenever an EA becomes available for public review.

To review any EA on the following list, please notify the Jordan Resource Area Planning and Environmental Coordinator in writing. In your request, be sure to include the area register number and project name for the specific EA.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Malheur R.A.
Jordan R.A.
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M A L H E U R
Quartz Mtn
Cedar Mtn
Crowley
Mahogany Mountain
Malheur Cave
Turnbull Lake
Dry Lake
Saddle Butte
Folly Farm
Upper Cow Lake
Lower Cow Lake
Sheaville
Jordan Valley
Danner
Arock
Jordan
Antelope Reservoir
Rome
Owyhee
Ten Cent Lake
Juniper Lake
Mann Lake
SHEEPSHEAD MTS
Palomino
Wildcat
Burns Junction
CROOKED CREEK STATE WAYSIDE
Soldier
Spring Gr
Indian Fort Gr
Dry Gr
Mahogany Gr
Cow Creek
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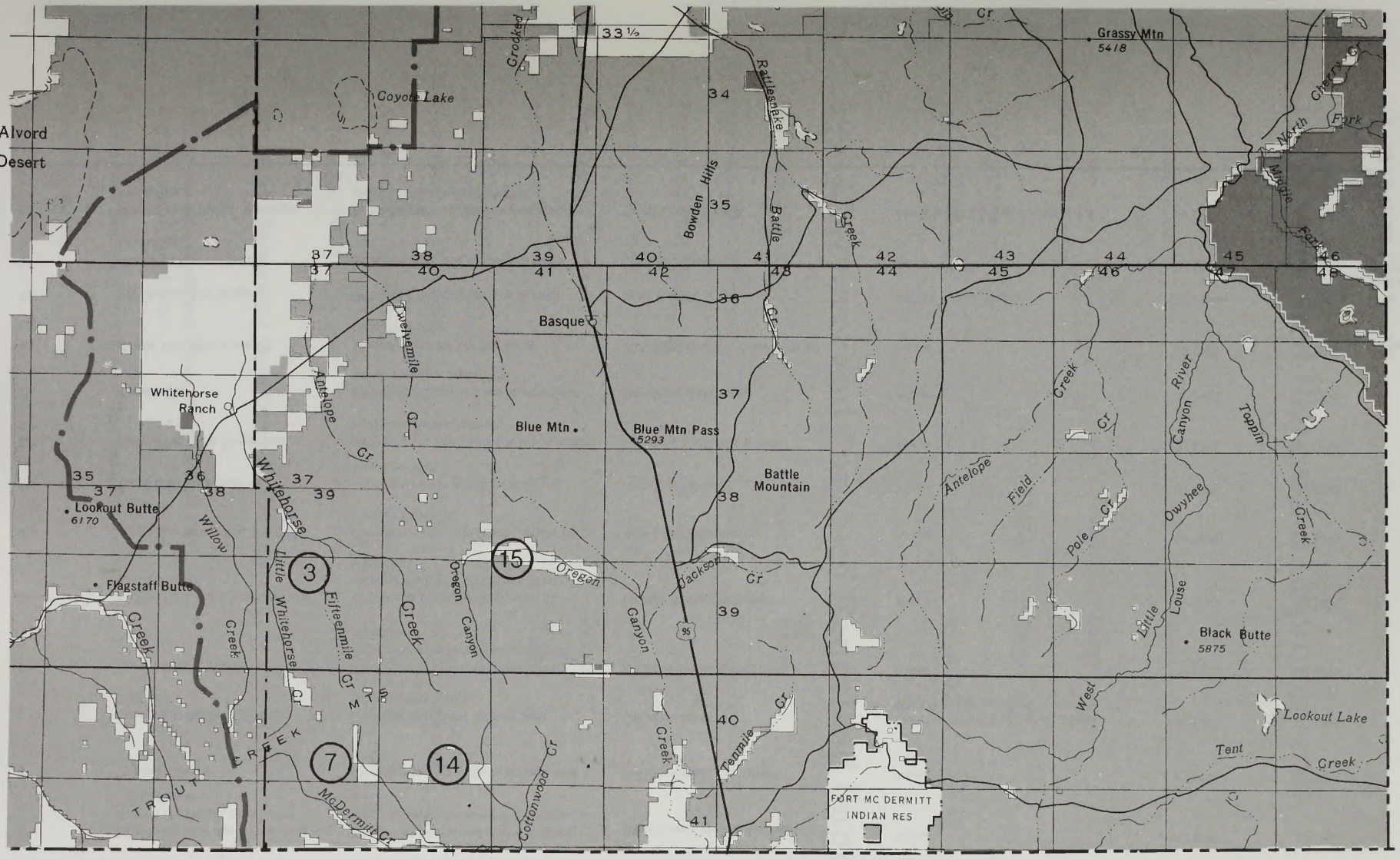


LEGEND

- District Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary
- BLM Lands
- State Lands
- Private Lands
- (4) Proposed 1995 Project

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

VALE DISTRICT

Jordan Resource Area

1995

1995 Environmental Assessment Register

Area Register Number	Project Name	Proposed Action	Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EA Completion Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
1	Owyhee Butte Pipeline	Extend the well pipeline and install water troughs.	West Cow Creek Allotment	None	4/1995	4/1995
2	Bennett Spring #2 Development	Develop spring and fence riparian area.	East Cow Creek Allotment	None	9/1995	9/1995
3	Macaroni Springs Pipeline	Construct 1 mile of pipeline.	Whitehorse Butte Allotment	Trout Creek Riparian Area	9/1995	9/1995
4	Dog Lake East and West Boundary Fence, and East Cross Fence	Construct fence and move existing fence to make three new pastures.	West Cow Creek Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
5	Parsnip Spring	Develop spring with head box and trough.	Willow Creek Allotment	None	6/1994	6/1994
6	Iron Point Bighorn Sheep Capture	Capture sheep for release into unoccupied range.	Owyhee River	Owyhee Wild and Scenic River, WSA's 3-195 & 1-110	5/1995	5/1995
7	Lower Boney Pipeline	Construct a pipeline from Lower Boney Reservoir to Disaster Peak Pipeline.	Zimmermann Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
8	Indian Fort Well Pipeline and Storage Tank	Construct pipeline from well to storage tank and to Crows Nest Pipeline.	Jackies Butte Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
9	Antelope Pipeline Cantor Pit	Construct pipeline from Cantor Pit to Cantor Pipeline.	Antelope Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
10	Field I, III Gap Fence	Construct four gap fences along Owyhee Rim.	Arock Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
11	Castro Pipeline Extension	Extend pipeline from Castro pipeline into Rim Basin Pasture.	Willow Creek Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
12	Cantor Pit	Determine alternatives to maintain water storage capability.	Antelope Allotment	None	3/1995	3/1995
13	Rome Hill Mile Post 40	Material source for highway construction.	U.S. Highway 95, Mile Post 40	None	3/1995	3/1995
14	Wilkinson Exchange	BLM and private land exchange.	Lasa Ranch	WSA's 3-152, 3-156,	3/1995	3/1995
15	Oregon Canyon Ranch Exchange	BLM and private land exchange.	Oregon Canyon Ranch	WSA 3-162	3/1995	3/1995
16	Birch Creek Ranch Management Plan	Provide interdisciplinary management for Birch Creek Ranch.	Birch Creek Ranch	Owyhee Wild and Scenic River	9/1995	9/1995

Appendix A

1994 Completed Rangeland Improvements

Type	Units	Benefiting Activity
New reservoirs (reconstruction)	2 each	Range
Pipelines (new/maintained)	1.3 miles	Range
Fences (new/removed/	1.5 miles	Range
Fences Maintained	5.0 miles	Riparian

1995 Carryover and Proposed Rangeland Improvements

Grey Spring Pipeline	1.5 miles	Range
Willow Reservoir Fence	0.25 miles	Range/Riparian
Basque Pipeline #2	7.0 miles	Range
Oliver Cross Fence	1.5 miles	Range
Tom Skinner Reservoir	1 each	Range
Mules Ear Reservoir	1 each	Range
Disaster Reservoir	1 each	Range
Cottonwood Cattleguard	1 each	Range/Riparian
Antelope Sdg. Pipeline	2.5 miles	Range
Rome Sdg. Fences	0.5 miles	Range

Allotment Management Plans Completed in 1994
None

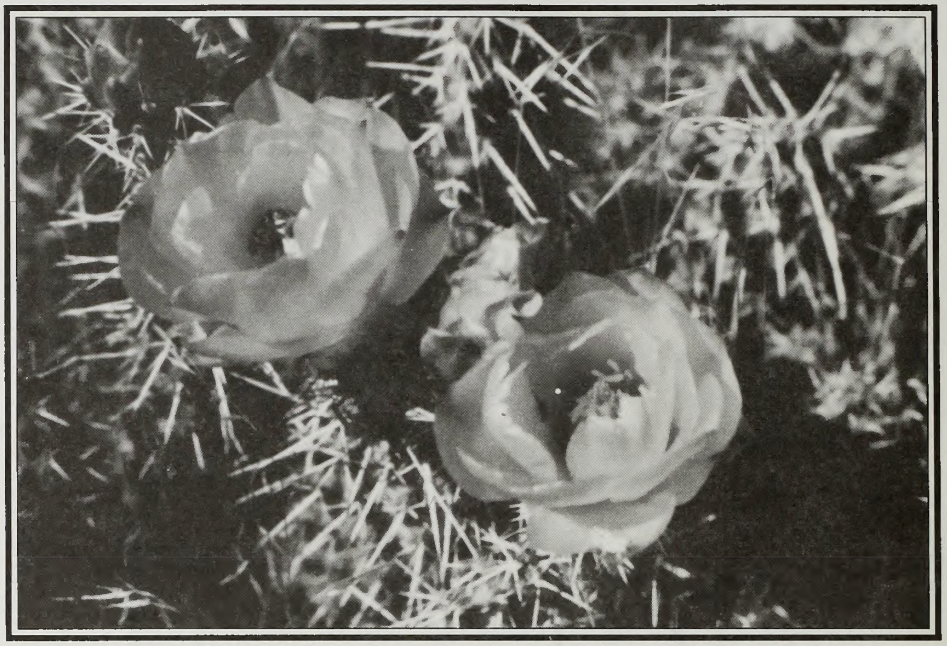
Allotment Management Plans Proposed in 1995
Zimmermann Allotment

Allotment Management Plans Proposed for Revision in 1995
West Cow Creek Allotment
Antelope Allotment

Range Program Summary
Maintenance
Planning document maintenance is an ongoing process. Documentation is required for changes to grazing systems, allotment boundaries, and pastures.

Allotment Evaluation
Wroten (11003)
Concerns: Current grazing strategy is not meeting the allotment objectives. Plant vigor is down as a result of drought and grazing.

Recommendations: Develop livestock water to enhance livestock distribution. Revise Allotment Management Plan to meet the allotment objectives in 1997.



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